

**Talking Points Reviewing Conversations
between President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev
(June 3 - 4, 1961)**

Overall U.S.-Soviet Relations

1. President began talks with expression of hope conversations would be useful and provide better understanding of problems confronting the two countries.
2. President said common objective should be to conduct competition of two systems without endangering peace. Problem is to find means of avoiding situations in which two countries become committed to actions involving their security. President stressed this point repeatedly.
3. Khrushchev stated desire for improved relations but not at expense other people. Referred to lack of direct conflict in economic field. Stressed need for solution basic questions, failing which tensions would continue: West must recognize de facto that Communism exists and has won right to develop. In luncheon toast Khrushchev decried idea of mutual concessions in negotiation, asking what could he concede and saying concession of even a portion of peace would mean no peace at all.
4. Khrushchev expounded on eventual Communist triumph through spread of ideas; claimed challenge lay in force economic example and in political arena; gave "guarantee" USSR would not try to propagate ideas by use of nuclear missiles; denied intent to use force of arms or impose its system on others.
5. President said USSR seeks to eliminate free system while objecting to any efforts of others to eliminate Communist system in the bloc. Rejected idea of historical inevitability of Communist triumph, defended the right of free popular choice.
6. Khrushchev tried to interpret the President's position as an effort to justify resort to arms to oppose the spread of Communist ideas.

"Miscalculation"

1. President outlined mutual danger of miscalculation. Cited historical examples and emphasized importance of considering views and

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positions of other side before embarking on a course of action. .

2. Khrushchev said miscalculation is vague term, Soviets can not guarantee Communist ideas won't spread. Term can be applied to both sides. USSR will defend its vital interests, can not be intimidated. USSR appreciates loss to both sides which war would bring but use of term "miscalculation" does not affect the USSR.

China

1. Khrushchev brought up China but stated he was not authorized to speak for the Chinese Communists. Urged the President to adopt a "reasonable" course by recognizing the Chinese Communists. Termed Chinese Communists' exclusion from the UN "unrealistic" but said Chinese Communists would never join the UN if the Chinese Nationalists were still there.

2. He termed present U.S. policy toward Chinese Communists unreasonable and said it might ultimately lead to war. Urged the U.S. to settle its problems with the Chinese Communists and end the "occupation" of Taiwan.

3. Khrushchev probed for possible changes in U.S.-China policy but President left him under no illusions that change could be expected. The President cited the constant hostility of the Chinese Communists towards the U.S. and acknowledged U.S. relations with Chinese Communists were indeed bad. He stressed that U.S. strategic interests were involved in the U.S. position on Taiwan and said that he considered the security of the U.S. involved as well.

Underdeveloped and Uncommitted Areas

1. Khrushchev denied responsibility for popular uprisings against "tyrannical regimes" and charged U.S. supported military dictators and opposed social change.

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3. President explained U.S. attitude toward Cuba, stressing

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Castro's destruction of right of free choice and his stated intent to use Cuba as base for expansion in neighboring area.

4. President asked Soviet attitude should West-oriented government be installed in Poland, said social and political changes in the world should take place in ways not involving national security, treaty commitments or prestige of two countries.

6. President sketched three U.S. interests: free choice through elections for all people; defense of our strategic interests events in next decade not greatly disturbing the balance of power (referred to effect of Chinese Communist development of military potential).

Colonialism

1. President expressed support for liberation movement in Africa, noted we had rankled allies to sustain this position.

2. Khrushchev replied U.S. position is basically anti-liberation, pro-allies.

3. President referred to Khrushchev's January speech and support of wars of national liberation. Stated that problem was how to avoid direct contact between two countries as we support respective groups; referred to Viet-Nam guerrilla activity and said we do not believe they represent popular will.

4. Khrushchev said people's only recourse often to arms,

5. President said we were concerned also with what followed nation-hood in such areas. Balance of power could be disturbed if they associated closely with USSR.

6. Khrushchev charged this meant U.S. could not recognize neutrality unless it followed U.S., said that if some African country

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went Communist this would be expression of popular will and our interference could set off chain reaction and lead to war.

7. President said situation in Burma, India and Yugoslavia satisfactory to us.

8. President referred again to Poland to illustrate problem of close association of neighboring country with antagonistic power.

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Laos

1. Khrushchev said both sides supplying arms in Laos. Side USSR supporting has popular support and would win out, like Mao vs. Chiang in China.

2. Both agreed Laos not strategically very important, but President noted our treaty commitments in the area and with reference to Laos.

3. Khrushchev took exception to reference to commitments, said U.S. could not assert special rights and dispense indulgences, as forces in world now in balance.

4. President noted U.S. and USSR had expressed desire for neutral and independent Laos, referred to Cambodia and Burma to illustrate meaning of those terms. Khrushchev assented.

5. President emphasized primary need for effective verification of cease-fire, citing reports of violation and need for new instructions to ICC.

6. Khrushchev digressed on anti-popular regimes again and said U.S. talks too much of anti-guerrilla warfare and such talk dangerous. Said guerrilla success dependent on local support, could not be gained from outside the country. Interference from outside could bring war and terrible prospect of mutual destruction.

7. Khrushchev said USSR would not agree to ICC becoming a kind of supra-government; three sides must agree among themselves regarding a cease-fire and U.S. and USSR could use influence to bring agreement about. Gromyko added ICC could act by agreement of Laotian parties. Khrushchev said basic question of formation of Laotian government should not be contingent on a cease-fire.

8. Khrushchev alleged and President denied U.S. had ordered and then recalled order for a Marine landing in Laos.

9. President stressed need of avoiding a situation which could lead to retaliation and counter-retaliation and thus endanger peace.

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Nuclear Testing

1. Khrushchev said two basic questions were: (1) number of suspicious events to be inspected and (2) organization of control.
2. Since events in the Congo the Soviet Union cannot accept proposed controls. Single administrator could set policy and Soviet Union could not accept neutral chairman as no person truly neutral.
3. Khrushchev said three inspections a year sufficient, greater number would be gathering of intelligence.
4. Khrushchev favored linking nuclear test question with disarmament. If disarmament agreement reached, USSR could accept any controls and would then drop Troika proposal and the requirement for unanimity. Two years should be sufficient to develop general and complete disarmament agreement.
5. President said testing treaty along lines Khrushchev proposed would not provide reasonable deterrent against violations and he could not send it to the Senate.
6. Khrushchev said test ban alone not important to national security if weapons production continued.
7. President stressed effect on proliferation of nuclear weapons and Khrushchev said this was why USSR had entered negotiations.
8. Khrushchev said in absence of link between test ban and disarmament other countries may say they are in unequal position and test weapons like France is doing.
9. President stressed treaty provisions for abrogation if other parties tested and noted relevant ease of controls of testing because they are based on scientific instrumentation.
10. (Gromyko defended the Soviet proposals for a tripartite administrator at great length in separate conversations with the Secretary.)
11. President said test ban would at least be very significant step and would facilitate disarmament agreement.

12. President

12. President said prospect of indefinite continuance of uncontrolled moratorium is a matter of great concern to U.S. Difficult to see how test ban could be included in disarmament negotiations which will probably require a long time. Perhaps we should make another effort at Geneva or recess the conference.

13. The President stated we would begin bilateral discussions on June 19 whether or not there was an agreement on nuclear testing. Khrushchev agreed to continued Geneva negotiations but reiterated USSR could not accept controls tantamount to espionage if weapons themselves were not eliminated.

14. In response to Khrushchev's question, President said he would not agree to tie test ban question to disarmament unless there was assurance disarmament agreement could be reached speedily. He said espionage problem insignificant in comparison with consequences of development of nuclear capability by other countries.

Disarmament

1. In response to President's question, Khrushchev said Soviet disarmament proposals provided for proceeding by stages and for control in each stage.

2. President inquired whether if general and complete disarmament accepted as a commitment of national policy and a nuclear test ban was included in the first stage would test ban be subject to inspection without veto.

3. Khrushchev replied that he would try to persuade President not to start with test ban as it not the most important measure. He said any measures, such as prohibition nuclear weapons, prohibition of manufacture of such weapons or elimination of military or missile bases, could come first.

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Germany and Berlin

1. Khrushchev attacked German militarism and said no delay in signature in a peace treaty was justifiable. USSR wanted agreement

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with U.S. but in its absence would sign a separate peace treaty with GDR, the state of war would cease and all commitments, including occupation rights, institutions and allied access would become invalid. U.S. troops could stay in Berlin under certain conditions; Soviet troops should also be there and neutral troops under UN guarantee would be acceptable.

2. The President contrasted Berlin with Laos. He said we fought to get to Berlin. Our national security is affected by what happens there, and we have contractual rights to which every President involved has reaffirmed his obligations. If we allowed ourselves to be expelled from Berlin no one could have confidence in our commitments and this deeply involves our national security. He, no more than Khrushchev, is prepared to preside over isolation of his own country.

3. President rejected Khrushchev's charge that reference to national security signified U.S. wanted to improve its position. The U.S. was not pushing but was interested in maintaining position in and access to Berlin. Situation might be unsatisfactory but situations elsewhere unsatisfactory and this not the right time to change Berlin situation. Neither U.S. nor USSR could accept the change in balance of power that would result from Soviet proposal.

4. Khrushchev defended peace treaty as restraint on German revanchists. Said no force could prevent USSR signing treaty. GDR sovereignty would then be established and its violation regarded by USSR as open aggression.

5. In reply to President's question, Khrushchev specifically said allied access to Berlin would be blocked by peace treaty. President reiterated that our views and interests should be carefully considered and said Khrushchev had laid down a most serious challenge with unforeseeable consequences. Expressed hope Khrushchev would consider both his and President's responsibilities toward their own countries.

6. Khrushchev maintained USSR wished only to formalize existing situation and gain recognition as a fait accompli of the existence of the GDR socialist state. Continuance of U.S. occupation rights after a peace treaty was impossible to imagine.

7. President

7. President said Soviet Union cannot give U.S. rights to the GDR.

8. Khrushchev said USSR prepared to accept interim agreement not involving prestige of two countries right now. Agreement could set six months time limit for Germans to solve question of reunification. Then U.S. and USSR could disavow responsibilities and anyone would be free to conclude a peace treaty. He expressed confidence that our people would not start cutting each other's throats for ideological reasons. Said USSR can delay no longer, will probably sign peace treaty at the end of the year. He later specifically referred to December.

9. Later Khrushchev said that USSR would be defending peace if the U.S. started a war in Berlin. U.S. should avoid miscalculation, but if U.S. wants war over Germany let it be so. He was confident common sense would gain the upper hand and peace prevail.

10. The President denied any wish to precipitate a crisis but stressed our profound commitment in Berlin. It is strategically important that the world believe the U.S. a serious country whose commitments one could rely on. Said signing of a peace treaty not a belligerent act but denial of our contractual rights would be.

11. Khrushchev said USSR would not accept U.S. rights in Berlin after a peace treaty and was convinced the world would understand the Soviet position.

12. The President said our position in West Berlin was strongly supported by the people there. President is prepared to discuss any problem between us but we should take carefully into account each other's views and interests. He did not assume office to accept arrangements totally inimical to U.S. interests.

13. Referring to an interim agreement Khrushchev said it would be a formal factor giving the semblance of turning the problem over to the Germans. He referred to the aide-memoire (later handed to U.S. officials) and concluded U.S. could study it and perhaps return to the question later if it wished.